

THE MCGILL DAILY

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Strumming at the old banjo since 1911

Tuesday, October 7th, 1992

Students demonstrate against violence on their streets

Taking Back the Ghetto

BY KATIE PICKLES

Approximately 200 McGill students participated in a Take Back the Ghetto demonstration on Monday night.

The demonstration was held to raise morale and show opposition to a number of attacks against women that have occurred in the area since the beginning of the fall term.

"I feel very threatened walking through the ghetto — especially knowing how many women have been attacked here," said McGill student Kelly McCready.

Julie Podmore said she was at the march "in solidarity for being able to walk safely on the streets."

Throughout the demonstration

students screamed, geered, blew whistles and shouted chants such as "By your violence, we won't be silenced" and "yes means yes, no means no, this kind of shit has got to go."

The march was organised by the McGill Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Walksafe, the Women's Union and the Sexual Assault Centre.

"It was fantastic," said Mary Margaret Jones, one of the organisers from the Sexual Assault Centre. "I was very very pleased with the turnout, the dynamic of the people and the enthusiasm shared."

A large number of men took part in the demonstration. Men had not been invited to participate in the Take Back the Night demonstration in September.

"I think that this is very important for men and women alike," said McGill student Jason Atlas. "Men can't shy away. We have to get involved as fellow students. The attitudes of society have to change."

Jay Stein, another McGill student, agreed.

"I think that it's very important that we all get together to solve this problem of violence and discrimination against women," he said. "This is a good outpouring of feelings about how people in the Ghetto feel."

Residents looked out of windows as the demonstration passed by, and several passers-by joined the procession.

Demonstrators stopped at the corner of Prince Arthur and Ste Famille to make a special amount



ELISABETH LISTON

Heading out to the Ghetto. Students begin the demonstration.

of noise in solidarity with the students who have been attacked there. One woman was raped there August 29 by a man with a knife, and a subsequent assault has also been reported.

"For a large street, the lighting on Ste Famille is horrible, and Lorne is also really bad," said Jones. "Im-

proved lighting would help to make the Ghetto safer."

Jones's advice to students walking through the Ghetto is to use Walksafe.

"People have a false sense of security and think that they can walk home by themselves," she said. "But it's just not safe."

Spoiled ballot campaign gains momentum

BY DAMION STODOLA

As "Referendumania" hits Québec again, some dissatisfied voters are considering spoiling their ballots as an alternative to either the yes or no campaigns.

Intimidated by political pressure tactics and frustrated by politicians' lack of vision, some voters see a spoiled ballot campaign as a way of participating in the political process without falling into either camp.

"Everybody's been told 'Shut the fuck up and vote and everything will be better,'" said Albert Nerenberg, columnist for the *Gazette* and local film-maker.

Bernard Loiselle, a member of the Collectif de la revue Mobilisation, organised one such ballot spoiling campaign called the Progressive Coalition for Annulment. The coalition was formed by a collection of socialist groups.

The group, formed in the last three weeks, has been distributing support letters around campus and in the downtown area.

Loiselle said his campaign offers a third alternative.

"There is a huge area in between the yes and no campaigns in which to politicise," he said.

Richard St-Pierre, a local activist who agrees with the idea of the spoiled ballot campaign, said that the referendum is irrelevant to a lot of Québécois.

"The referendum is engaging in ruling class politics," said St. Pierre. "It doesn't address social issues."

Loiselle said the government is ignoring the best interests of the people.

"They are governing a minority," said Loiselle. "All the politicians



Bernard Loiselle

have vested interests with nothing to do with our welfare."

To date only 120 people have publicly supported the coalition. But Loiselle is not overly concerned with the small number.

"The annulment rate will probably be 1%," said Loiselle. "But our coalition is starting point. We have a long way to go."

Loiselle also maintains the referendum is divisive. Loiselle cited the recent split between the Fédération des Travailleurs Québécois and the Conseil des Travailleurs au Canada unions as a perfect example of the divisive effects of the referendum.

Not Solving the Real Problems

Loiselle said the accord does not solve the real problems facing Canadians such as poverty, racial tensions and native rights.

"It's only a collection of good

intentions," said Loiselle "Voting yes or no is playing into the hands of both campaigns."

St-Pierre, a local political activist, agreed. He said that he objected to being asked to vote on an incomplete document.

"The proposition of accepting a document which is obviously flawed is unacceptable," said St-Pierre.

Loiselle says a "yes" vote is equivalent to voting for the status quo, while a "no" vote offers no valid solutions. He said voters have been sidetracked from the real issues and have fallen prey to the political terror tactics of both campaigns as a result of the complexity of the accord.

"25 per cent of Québec's population is under the poverty line," said Loiselle. "When did you last hear Chrétien, Bourassa or Parizeau speak of the misery of many Québécois?"

Loiselle believes many voters will abstain from voting due to the conflict between voting on the issues and supporting politicians incapable of representing the population.

Both Loiselle and Nerenberg said a spoiled ballot campaign has more impact than abstaining from the process. Unlike abstentions, spoiled ballots are tallied and counted as a percentage of those who voted.

Loiselle said he was not attempting to perform miracles but pointed out his alternative at least offers voters a way participating in the vote.

"Analysts are predicting a 25 per cent abstention rate," said Loiselle. "Our campaign allows those people to participate in the political process."

Killer acronyms descend on Holiday Inn Conference to examine position of Cégeps

BY DAVE LEY

Student politicians from across Québec will come together for the next three days to discuss the position of Cégeps in Québec, including the possibility of tuition fees at the Cégep level.

This year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the introduction of the Cégep system. The government has proposed celebrating the anniversary by introducing fees for Cégep students for the first time.

Frédéric Lapointe, president of le Fédération Etudiante Collégiale du Québec (FECQ), an organisation representing students at eight Cégeps, said the conference would address all questions pertaining to the Cégep system, including the controversial question of funding and tuition fees.

"It would be unacceptable for Cégep students to have to pay tuition fees," said Lapointe.

"FECQ is normally quite a moderate organisation, but if the government tries to do this it will find a lot of resistance," he said.

McGill delegates include Students' Society vp external Jeff Percival and Grad Students' Society vp external Eugenio Bolongaro, also president of the provincial graduate association, le Regroupement des Associations des Cycles Supérieurs du Québec (RACSQ).

"What we're trying to establish is a link between Cégeps and Universities," said Percival. "We will not be taking a leadership role."

The conference is organised by the Institut Québécois des Colloques Etudiantes, of which four of the five student associations in Québec are members.

Québec's other and most radical student association, l'Association Nationale des Etudiantes et Etudiants du Québec (ANEEQ), which represents students at 16 Cégeps and two universities, is not part of the institute and will attend only as an observer.

André Gangon, member of the executive for ANEEQ was skeptical about the usefulness of the conference.

"We have better things to do," said Gangon. "We might send one or two delegates but there are more important things going on."

The associations within the institute include FECQ, its university counterpart, le Fédération Etudiante Universitaire du Québec (FEUQ), representing students at nine universities, RACSQ, representing six graduate student associations, and the provincial continuing education association Fédération des Association Etudiantes Universitaires Québécois (FAEUQEP).

Come see your student politicians in action as they schmooze at the Holiday Inn, at Sherbrooke and Berri. Starts 9h tomorrow and goes till 12h on Friday.



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26th INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CONGRESS SUFFERING & HAPPINESS

The civilization of western well-being has not found happiness in its wealth nor meaning in its suffering. Have other societies, less favoured social classes or individuals discovered the key to happiness, and significance in their suffering?

In preparation to the 1993 International UNIV Congress, issues such as those suggested above will be dealt with through encounters of participants. Following the meetings, visits to hospitals, soup kitchens and retirement homes will be organized to give participants contact with true suffering and with the search for genuine happiness.

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events

The Pillar is currently accepting submissions of poetry, fiction, essays and features for publication. Drop off submissions at the SSMU desk or 3479 Peel st. 3rd floor by Oct. 14.

Preston Manning will be speaking at Concordia's Loyola Campus' main building c-111 at 12:00. Come to watch, come to protest.

Victor Moche of the ANC and Manuel Managua of the FFMPIN of El Salvador will be speaking on the topic "Revolution or Reform? The Challenge for a Government of the People" today at 12:30 at 3644 Peel st, room 202.

SSMU presents the Italian Student's Association movie at 14:30 in Bronfman 634. All welcome.

McGill Biology Student's Union Presents a Graduate Studies Info Session today in Stewart Bio, Room S3/3. Dr Don Kramer of the Biology Dept. will be providing any information you need to know about graduate studies in Biology at McGill at 16:30.

Winter Carnival needs your help. The first and very crucial meeting will be held today at 18:30 at 550 Sherbrooke room 1180.

The second meeting of the Indian Progressive Study Group will be today at 19:00 in the Shitner Bill-Dung room 435. They will be discussing issues concerning India and South Asia, all are welcome.

The McGill Christian Fellowship presents it's first in a series of lectures entitled "How God Communicates Through Scripture" or "How to divine the true nature of all things from goat entrails" Today at 19:00 at Thompson House in the downstairs Back Lounge.

ACT UP Montréal needs you! The AIDS crisis is everyone's crisis. Come and get involved today at 19:30 at 3600 Hotel de Ville, or call 527-2423.

"Can Socialism come Through Parliament" or "Can we tie our Shoes with our heads in the Clouds?": a meeting of the International Socialists today in the union 302 at 19:30.

The Academic Alliance of English Teachers present an open forum on Copyright at Dawson College, 3040 Sherbrooke st. West, room 5B-16 at 19:30 today.

"Dave goes Climbing in Nepal" slide show of the Outing Club meeting today at 19:30 in Leacock 132.



An Overnight Lightning Case

women's briefs

Student allegedly raped, university slow to respond

Students denounced administrators at the University of P.E.I. for not contacting the police immediately following an alleged rape and beating at a campus residence.

The university only announced the incident after the alleged victim's mother went public with the story.

"City police didn't take over the case until six days after the incident, when the woman filed a formal complaint of sexual assault," said constable Richard Collins, community relations officer for the Charlottetown police.

The complaint states that an 18-year-old student was abducted from a residence party on September 23. Her wrists were bound and she was raped and beaten so badly that she was hospitalized.

The university has been accused of covering up the incident.

"People are angry that they didn't know something happened," said Tracey Arsenault, president of the student council. "We're scared for our own safety."

According to Sonya Banks, the university's director of public relations, campus security began investigating the disturbance immediately.

She would not confirm that campus security were investigating an alleged sexual assault.

About 500 faculty, staff and students attended a rally to protest the way the university administration handled the incident.

— Ottawa (CUP)

Woman sentenced for dirty apartment

Peggy Messer has been found guilty by a Milwaukee judge of misdemeanor child neglect, after she moved into a cheap but cockroach infested apartment.

The judge, in his sentence statement, said while he realized the situation was temporary, Messer should have "improved the environment" for her children's sake.

Messer was convicted despite the fact that Wisconsin laws recognize poverty as a reason for poor living conditions. The conditions at Messer's home constitute a violation of Wisconsin housing codes rather than child safety laws.

The landlord was not questioned.

— off our backs

One year after Hill-Thomas

October 11 marks the one-year anniversary of Anita Hill's testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In keeping with the occasion, here are some suggestions to commemorate the day: have a sexual harassment awareness day at your place of work, speak out in class if you hear guys snickering about the woman professor, and tell your co-worker to stop pinching your ass.

Ask a friend if she's ever been harassed, ask your mom, ask the Sexual Harassment Officer (you can do it anonymously), ask McGill to stop protecting nice-guy professors. And at the end of the day, get together with your friends, bring some food and just gripe.

Abortion rights struggle continues in Germany

The German government has blocked a law which would have equalized abortion rights for women in the recently reunified country.

The law, which was to have given all German women the limited right to an abortion, was stopped by a court injunction just hours before it was to go into effect. The laws governing abortion, currently restrictive for women living in Western Germany, will remain in effect until the end of the year.

— off our backs

Feminist prof barred from teaching

Pauline Barr, a professor at the University of Illinois, has been barred from teaching ever again, after a dean accused her of being too "maternal" and "therapeutic" toward her students.

The ban took place after a male member of her class on Gender and Society accused her of sexism and racism. The man, who said that he did not know the difference between sex and rape during a class discussion of Mike Tyson's rape conviction, brought the charges after Barr asked him to leave the course.

Barr says that the student's comments were derogatory toward women, and that several women students had complained to her.

The university wants Barr to retire early.

— off our backs

Ladycab to the rescue

Women in London, England now have a choice when calling a cab. Ladycab, a women-run taxi service, offers services to "society's vulnerable: women, children, the elderly and the disabled." Drivers only pick up men they know, or men who need special help.

Yvonne Williams and Joan Campbell created another woman cab company, Paradise Cars, in Oxford, because they were fed up with stories they heard about female passengers being harassed or ripped off by male taxi drivers. To combat these problems, they pick up only women and children under 16, although they accept men when accompanied by a woman.

While business has been slow for Paradise Cars, one devoted customer says "It's sort of like having your mother around to give you a lift."

— Ms.

— compiled by Rebecca Handford

Unity sought within the Black community

BY ELISA HOLLENBERG

Representatives of the Haitian, Zairian and Jamaican communities of Montréal met to discuss ways of creating a unified leadership in all Black communities.

Two hundred and fifty people attended the day long conference held by the Black Coalition of Québec on Saturday. Ninety eight per cent of the conference participants voted in favor of a proposal to establish a regional commission within the Black community.

"The white majority are going to say the Black community so we have should try to join all members of the Black community and work together," said Franz Lemaire, a representative of the Haitian community.

"It is not only the leaders, not only the associations — this is the problem of all Black people. Each one of them has the responsibility to sit down together and think about the community."

The proposal will be implemented over a six month period. According to Lemaire, each organization will determine the extent of their contribution to the commis-

sion. It is hoped that each organization will nominate candidates to be elected by the Black community.

The commission will consist of sixteen members whose four year

"I did not see the Black women's congress represented today," she said. "Single mothers who are heading the households should have been here."

"We cannot talk about the problems of a certain sector without involving them," said Seale.

According to a student from l'Université de Montréal, action was needed to mobilize black community voting power due to the upcoming referendum and a probable federal election. The question of the referendum was not on the table for discussion.

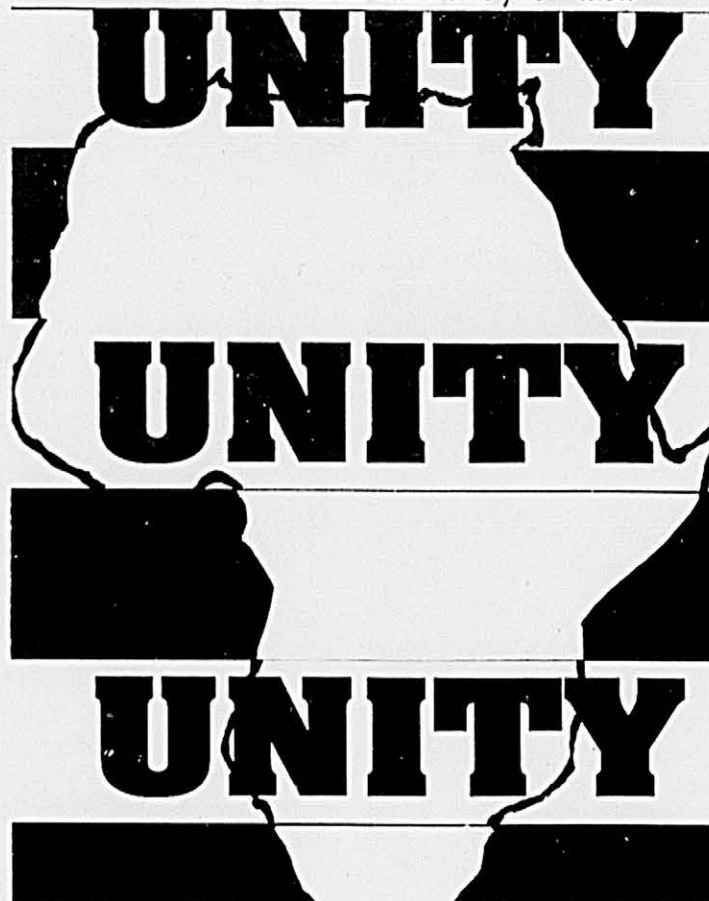
"These are the only times when everybody could have their say, and we're not getting ready for that," he said.

Seale was concerned that the

discussion was undemocratic.

"I think the panel had a hidden agenda," she said. "It is good that we would have people speaking in one voice, it's good to have unity in the community, but there are other things that must be dealt with."

She also suggested that the voices of young delegates were not heard. "Silencing young people who disagree is a serious problem that has to be looked into."



mandate will attempt to represent the Black community as a whole.

Missing Issues & Voices

Some conference participants were unhappy with the conference's agenda.

Antonia Seale, a conference participant, was concerned that members from certain sectors of the Black community were not heard.

Can't decide whether to vote "Yes" or "No"? Vote twice!

OTTAWA (CUP) — Students and other nomadic Canadians could vote twice in the upcoming referendum.

Students from Québec studying in another province can be enumerated to vote in the riding their school is located in. But they may also vote in Québec if they registered with the Registry of Electors Outside Québec before September 28.

Denise McCulloch, community relations and youth liaison officer for Elections Canada, said it's not really voting twice because the results from the two referenda will be tabulated separately.

"It's as if there was a federal and provincial election at the same time," she said.

"I don't think it will make a big difference in the outcome of the referenda," she added.

However, it is a fraud to vote twice in the federal referendum — for instance, in B.C. and Ontario. If caught, you face a \$1000 fine.

But a student studying outside their home province could be enumerated twice by mistake.

"A student from Alberta attending the University of Ottawa could enumerate themselves in Ontario,



and also be enumerated by their parents in Alberta," said McCulloch. "But this in itself does not constitute an offense."

McCulloch said Elections Canada has no way of checking to see if people are registered to vote in more than one province.

Christine Pepin, a 20-year-old University of Ottawa student from Québec City has missed the Québec registry's deadline because she didn't know she could vote in Québec.

"It makes a difference to me," she said. "I want my vote to count in

Québec. I don't know if I will vote now."

She added that voting in Québec was more important to her than what mark she made on the ballot.

She said she would have been able to register in time if proper information had been made available to students like her.

Students from other provinces studying in Québec may also be able to vote in both referenda, but Québec's Referendum Act requires six months' residence in Québec to qualify as a Québec voter.

In the rest of Canada, people must be residents in their ridings on the first day of enumeration, October 2, to be eligible to vote.

If students want to vote by proxy in their home riding that is the only vote they may cast.

McCulloch said the confusion this year is due to the policy of not exchanging voting information between Québec and the rest of Canada.

"Elections Canada and Elections Québec don't mingle," she said.

According to McCulloch, normally 45 per cent of 18 to 24 year-old Canadians participate in voting, compared with 75 percent of the general population.

Total war in the Philippines

by
Michele Smith

Canada's dubious record

Canada is one of the countries on the NDF's agenda. Already underway, their tour includes discussions with the government, and non-governmental organisations, in hopes of being recognized by Canadians as the political opposition in the Philippines, status the Philippine government has not attributed them.

Considering Canada's former involvement in the Philippines, it may well prove to be a valuable agent in persuading the government to sit down and negotiate a peaceful settlement of war.

After Marcos was ousted, Canada poured millions of dollars into the Philippines, expecting the country to achieve a level of political and economic stability which would benefit Canada's growing trade and influence in Southeast Asia.

In 1986, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) established the \$11 million Negros Rehabilitation and Development Fund (NRDF), with the stated intent of "helping" Negros sugarcane workers weather a drop in international sugar prices.

The 1989 *Philippines Country Profile* states that "in the short term, the NRDF provided immediate relief to the people most seriously affected by the collapse of the sugar-based economy, especially the sugar workers in the area."

In reality, the CIDA funds eventually found their way into the hands of Filipino government-backed paramilitary squads and wealthy landlords. The funds had been channelled by CIDA through conservative Philippine government agencies.

The failure of the program obliged CIDA to rework its entire aid program in the Philippines.

When the reality of Aquino's regime was revealed, money, much of it coming from Canadian taxpayers, continued to flow into corrupt hands in the form of development aid.

Canada also supports the Filipino military establishment. The Canadian Peace Report (Winter 1991-92) has documented direct sales of Canadian arms to the Philippines between 1988 and 1990. More than just benevolent provider of financial aid, Canada has played a substantial role in the war waged by the Filipino government.

Considering the history of Canada's involvement in the Philippines, it seems unlikely that Canada will intervene on the NDF's behalf. But international relations are rarely static.

The government of Canada likes to flaunt its role as an international peace-broker. Although hardly living up to that reputation at present, it is possible that it could change its approach, if public pressure was applied.

Coni Ledesma, Executive Director of the National Democratic Front International Office, and Byron Bocar, Representative of the NDF for Western Europe, will be discussing their peace plan Tuesday, October 13, 7:30 p.m. in the Leacock Building room 132. For more info, call the Network for a Just and Lasting Peace in the Philippines (NJLP) at 284-3726 or 631-3898.

Six years ago, a revolution of sorts ousted Philippine president Fidel Marcos. At the time, people believed the popular uprising would end a 17-year reign of terror and violence.

But the new president-elect Cory Aquino quickly showed herself to be just as repressive. She withdrew from talks with the National Democratic Front (NDF), the underground coalition of organizations which has been at the forefront of the opposition movement for 23 years.

Her government, and the government of Fidel Ramos which followed, has ever since pursued a policy of "total war" against the NDF and its member organizations the New People's army (NPA) and the Communist Party of the Philippines. Issues such as land reform and development of locally-owned industry, part of the NDF platform, have been ignored by the government, which instead devotes resources to continuing the total war policy.

It was Ramos, then secretary of national defense, who engineered the policy of total war, backed up by massive US aid. The results were devastating.

Executive director of Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, Evelyn Belais, on a Canadian tour this past summer, explained that human rights violations have risen incredibly as a result of the total war, and many civilians have been imprisoned or killed. She said that of 641 political detainees languishing in jails as prisoners of the Aquino administration, 39 were women and 27 were minors.

"Women and children are most vulnerable in situations of armed conflict," she said. "They are raped, tortured, harassed and killed. In 1991 alone more than 500 unarmed civilians have been killed in militarized areas, more than half of whom are children."

Internal refugees

The total war is a form of "Low Intensity Conflict" like those used to destroy revolutionary forces in Vietnam and Latin American countries. Aiming to demoralize the rural peasantry, the main support base for the NPA forces, this policy directly affects more than just the guerrillas.

Massive military operations force people to leave their communities and become "internal refugees" inside their own country. Entire populations are relocated to unsanitary crowded refugee centers, where they may wait months or years before being moved to another area. Others are sent to makeshift communities far from schools, stores and hospitals. During the past three years, these internal refugees have

numbered over 2 million.

"Here, the land is bad, not like in my place. Nothing grows here," said Lisette (not her real name), who was relocated with her family to a mountainous region on the island of Negros.

"The school is over an hour away, and there is no doctor." The military strategy is to keep the population in a general state of fear, and soldiers frequently rape, torture and kill villagers at random.

"Two months ago the military bombed the area and one man died. Sometimes they come around and shoot," Lisette said.

People who offer food or lodging to rebel soldiers are labelled as communists and risk government reprisals, as are those who refuse to join government-organised civilian armed patrols.

"They always check all the houses to make sure everyone is still here. There are almost no men here. They are too afraid they will be accused as being an NPA," Lisette said.

"I haven't seen my husband in over a year. The military picked him up while he was washing the clothes. Maybe he is washing the clothes of the military now."

"There are no civilians in the Marag Valley"

The murder and disappearance of legal left-wing activists has become commonplace. Accused of being communist fronts, popular community organizations are often forced to dismantle, suspending

their work with various sectors of the population.

Two years ago, a group of musicians on Panay Island were attacked by paramilitary patrols after a performance criticising the repressive Filipino government.

"We were riding home in a jeepney (local transport) and the patrols blocked the road so we couldn't get through," said one of the musicians. "They made us get out of the jeep. Some of them grabbed our instruments. I couldn't play for a while after that because they smashed my guitar. At least we got away okay."

Last December, a seventeen-year-old member of the band was shot by the military. While his parents waited at the hospital, army officials told them their son was a drug addict, and involved with the NPA. He later died.

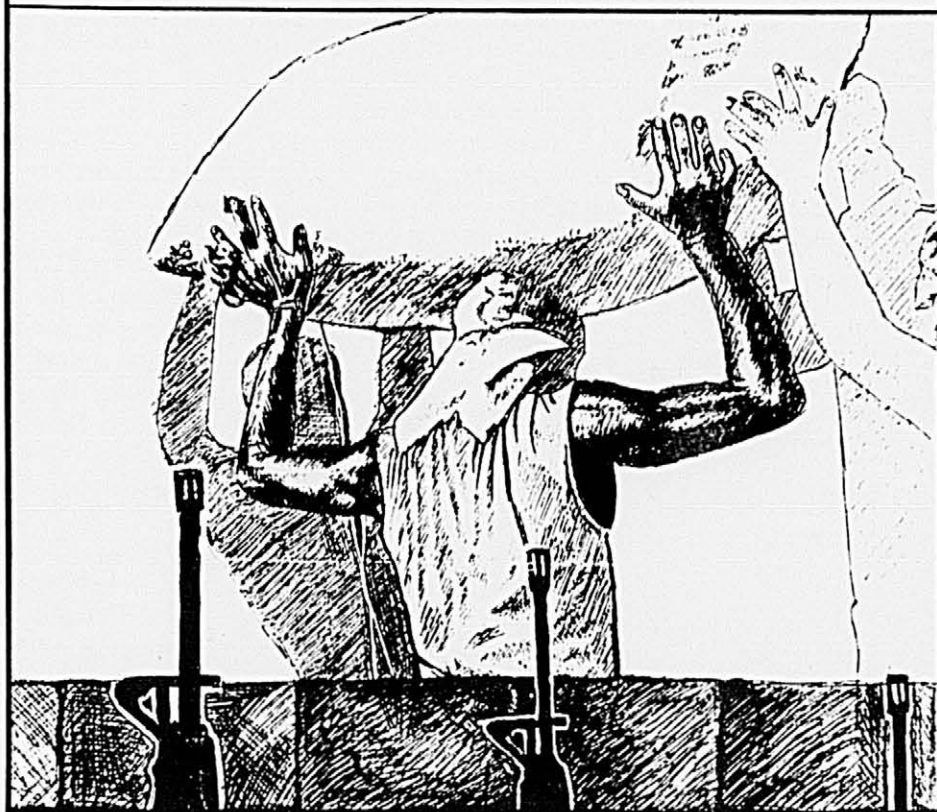
The Philippines' indigenous population of five and a half million is particularly hurt by the government's total war policy.

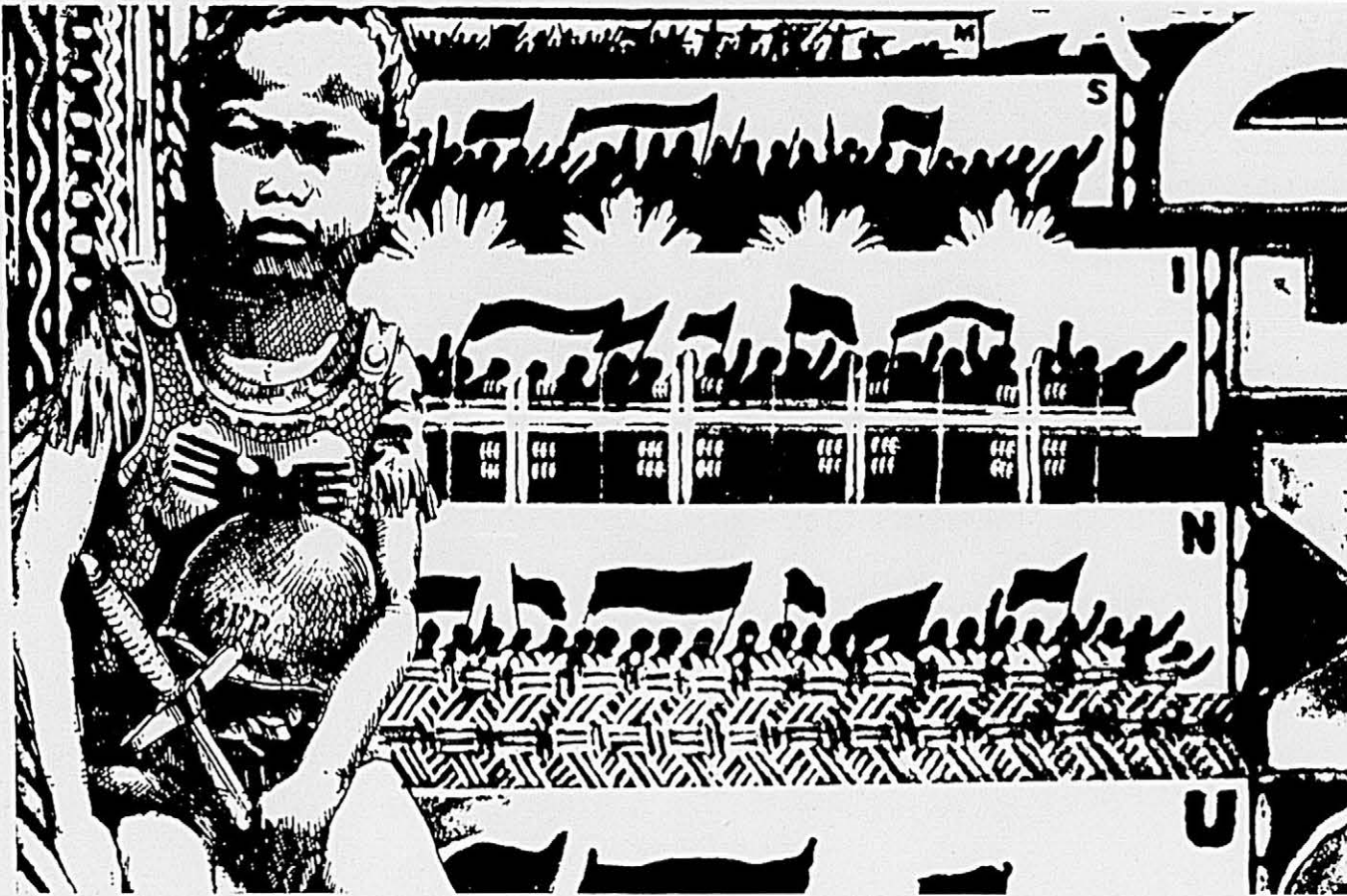
After several centuries of colonization, most of the indigenous population has been driven into the hinterlands, where the NPA now operate.

These people are often accused of being Communists and NPA sympathizers despite their political views. In the Marag Valley, massive military operations resulted in the death of thousands, and reduced living standards of the indigenous people living there to that of animals. Yet Brigadier General Homer C. Capulong, the commander in the region, claimed, "there are no civilians in the Marag Valley."

In other cases, indigenous peoples have

PAGKAON, PANGINABUHAN, KALINAW: PAKIGBISOGAN!





had to organize to protect their lands from encroachment by logging and mining companies.

The New People's Army

Composed mostly of peasants from rural areas, the New People's Army (NPA) was formed 23 years ago out of the remnants of the Huks, the revolutionary forces fighting to end U.S. domination at the turn of the century. Around the time the Philippines became independent, the Huks put down their arms to wage a peaceful struggle. The result: the land that had been distributed to poor peasants was reclaimed by landlords, and guerrilla leaders and members were arrested and massacred by the military.

Deciding peaceful actions were futile in effecting changes in the Philippines, peasants, students and other sectors of the population armed themselves and took their struggle to the hills. The NPA has grown to about 30 000, increasing in strength as social and economic conditions in the country have deteriorated.

"The NPAs are people from our communities who have grown weary of the oppressive economic situation in the

mountains and saw that the only way out is to fight back," said Arthur Allid-Iw, education officer of the Cordillera People's Alliance, a community organisation representing indigenous people.

The NPA receives no foreign backing, relying on arms seized from the military and the support of the community.

Luis Jalendoni, NDF Vice-Chairperson for International Affairs, said that the NDF goes well beyond the ranks of a handful of fanatic rebels, which is how it is often portrayed.

"The NDF has a clear political program and exercises de facto national political leadership over a considerable part of the national population and territory," Jalendoni says. "It has been performing functions of government, including land reform, health and education services, among others, through its local organs of political power."

Such services have won the confidence of many rural inhabitants.

"We do not feel fear when the NPA come around," says Virgie, living in an Internal Refugee area in Negros. "They do not hurt us. But the military does."

Lissa, working with a women's organization in the same area says, "Oh yes, the NPA are very good. We'll meet up

with them on our way to communities in the mountains...they offer to carry our bags."

Peace talks

Fidel Ramos faces a population daunted by Aquino's regime, manifestation of the failed "people power" revolution. Land distribution remains very unequal. Over three-quarters of the population lives under the poverty line. The government pays over 40 per cent of its budget to interest payments on the foreign debt. On top of this, military operations continue.

"People in the Philippines are sick of the war and injustices; it has gone on for too long," says Dina Razon-Abad, executive director of the Philippines-Canada Human Resource Development program.

Aware of a demoralized populace, Ramos has made attempts to address the demands of the National Democratic Front, leaders of the popular insurgency.

Only a month ago, preliminary talks between the NDF and the government of the Philippines began. Although some sectors are hopeful, leaders of the popular

movement, familiar with Ramos' past as warlord and U.S. confidante, are suspicious of his motives.

Congressman Jose Yap, speaking on behalf of Ramos at The Hague, last August 31, reaffirmed that peace talks would have to be done their way or not at all.

Yap said that the peace talks would only be carried out under specific conditions, including "the acceptance by the NDF of the supremacy of the constitution of the Republic of the Philippines as the fundamental law of the land and the basis for national peace and progress" and "the recognition by the NDF of only one authorized armed forces for the country and, therefore, of the illegality and necessity to disband all other organized armed groups."

Basically, Yap said the NDF must surrender their arms in order for peace talks to begin, an issue which meant the breakdown of past peace talks.

The 1986 ceasefire and talks that followed proved to be a disaster. Many NDF leaders and members of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the NDF, were lured to the surface with promises of genuine peace talks. Having revealed themselves, they were arrested. No talks took place.

Considering these restraints, the NDF is launching a renewed campaign for peace in the Philippines, which can only come with peace talks involving a genuine effort on behalf of the government to address the NDF's agenda. The NDF is soliciting international support, a strategy which proved effective on peace negotiations in war-torn countries such as South Africa and El Salvador.

The European Parliament and the Swiss government have already expressed support for bilateral peace talks, recognizing the NDF as the main political opposition in the Philippines. They have even offered venues, a move to ensure the security of the NDF negotiators. But so far, the Government of the Philippines has insisted that peace talks be held in the Philippines, claiming that the "insurgency" is an internal matter.

The military strategy is to keep the population in a general state of fear, and soldiers frequently rape, torture and kill villagers at random.

The twelve point program of the NDF

The NDF is the main united front organization in the Philippines today, which is fighting to establish a national democratic society. Its International Office, situated in Utrecht, Netherlands, was opened during the height of the Marcos dictatorship in the late 1970's. The organization was founded immediately after Marcos instated martial law in 1972.

Some of its member organizations include: Makibaka (Free Organisation of New Women), Kabataag Makabayan (Nationalist Youth), New People's Army, Communist Party of the Philippines, Revolutionary Worker's Movement, Christians for National Liberation, ARMA (artists' group), Revolutionary Peasant's Movement, and other sectors of Philippine society.

The NDF dedicates itself to the following Twelve Point Program. It offers the Program as the guide and rallying point of the Filipino people as they strive to build a new Philippines.

1. Unite the people for the overthrow of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system through a people's war and for the completion of the national democratic revolution.
2. Establish a people's democratic republic and a democratic coalition government.
3. Build a people's revolutionary army and a people's defence system.
4. Uphold and promote the people's democratic rights under the new democratic system.

5. Dismantle the U.S. military bases, and terminate all unequal relations with the United States and other foreign entities.

6. Implement genuine agrarian reform, promote rural cooperation, raise rural production and employment through modernization of agriculture and rural industrialization and ensure agricultural sustainability.

7. Break the U.S./comprador/landlord dominance over the economy, carry out national industrialization, and build an independent sovereign economy. The economy will be a mixed one, consisting of private, co-operative, and state sectors.

8. Adopt a comprehensive and progressive social policy. The new government's social policy will aim to redistribute the benefits of economic growth, with priority given to the socially disadvantaged classes and sectors.

9. Promote a national and progressive people's culture.

10. Uphold the rights of the Bangsa Moro and the Cordillera peoples, and other indigenous peoples to self-determination and democracy.

11. Advance the revolutionary emancipation of women in all spheres

12. Adopt an active, independent, and non-aligned foreign policy.

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THE MCGILL DAILY

comment

It can happen to you

This week is AIDS Awareness Week. It isn't just about wearing a red ribbon. It's about celebrating life — in particular your life, whether you have AIDS or not. In 1992, the AIDS crisis is no longer something at the back of conscious thought. It's a reality that each and every sexually active member of our society has to deal with on a day-to-day basis.

We now know that AIDS isn't a gay, black, male, female, or drug addict's disease. It's everyone's disease. We also know that people living with AIDS aren't perverts or victims of Divine Wrath. People living with AIDS aren't victims, period.

This week marks a time to reflect on the terrible toll the disease has taken, how it affects you individually, and how it affects those around you. This week marks a time for compassion, both for yourself and for those with the disease.

How does AIDS affect the educated university student — young, healthy, streetwise? It affects you because despite what we know about the disease, little in our sexual behavior has changed over the past few years. It affects you because you may easily have it.

The tragedy of it all is that you really want to believe it can't happen to you. Well it can, and does. You also want to believe that you could spot someone with AIDS. You can't. Most people living with AIDS are every bit as normal, and initially as healthy, as you. You know the only completely safe activity is abstinence, but that just doesn't seem a viable, livable alternative for most people.

Safe sex is viable, and it will keep you alive. Not practising it is like playing with a loaded gun. This week is not a time to be scared, but it is a time to reflect. To think about our behavior, to think about how we treat those with the disease, to think about life with it.

People living with AIDS are the mirror of each and every one of us who put ourselves at risk. If you are practising unsafe sex on a regular, or even irregular basis, you not only put others at risk, you sign your own death certificate.

I am confident that a cure for AIDS will be found, and that hope forms an integral part of what this week is all about, for those with AIDS as well as those without. I am also aware of the reality we live in. AIDS is not curable now, and until it is, it will remain the single largest determinant factor in human sexual behavior.

Think about it. You have a whole week.

James Forbes

Letters

Imaginative Interpretation

To the Daily:

An open letter to the PSC:

I personally found the article you chose to run in the multi-cultural issue of the *Daily* awkward and inappropriate.

It struck me as odd that you would choose to keep playing the victim/martyr role now that the democratically elected Labour party in Israel has made tangible and real concessions towards both the Palestinian people and the peace process itself.

Besides blatant misrepresentations and imaginative interpretation, the article you selected to promote your group on campus did not once mention support or acknowledgement of the ongoing peace talks.

Does the PSC support the peace talks?

We all know how easy it is to play the victim, instead of acknowledging the fact that all the sides are talking. Maybe it is time to acknowledge it.

A little suggestion from a friend: Write to GUPS (the General Union of Palestinian Students), and ask them for some updated propaganda.

The old stuff just won't wash on campus anymore.

Daniel Koffler
U2 Political Science

Oops

To the Daily:

I am white. I am male. And yes, I am a heterosexual. My apologies to anyone who is bothered by that. It is very inconsiderate of me.

Carl Brabander
U3 Communications

Culture-blind questions

To the Daily:

I was generally pleased by the quality of the writing in last Monday's Culturefest Edition (September 28); nevertheless, the article discussing the South Asian Women's Centre was



Letters

troublesome.

The article claimed to be talking about the particular problems which South Asian immigrant women face daily in Montréal; however, there was neither a discussion of conflicts brought about by cultural differences nor of the institutionalised racism with which these women must learn to deal.

Instead, we got a series of hackneyed and culture-blind questions from the author, which facilitated a practically culture-neutral response from the interviewees. Indeed, for the most part, one could replace "South Asian" or "Indian" (although they are not strictly interchangeable) and install another geographic/cultural label.

The author's naive and simplistic approach to examining the lives of South Asian immigrant women inhibits attempts to really understand and probe into the complexities of struggles and negotiations that these and other new Canadians undergo.

I do realise that the author focussed on the operation of the Centre itself and was perhaps obliged to inquire about administrative details; all the same, her questions did not promote any sort of serious, informative dialogue. In fact, by generalising the experiences of diverse immigrant peoples, the author has assisted mainstream society's process of rendering them invisible.

Nityanand Deckha
U3 Arts

Mindless reflex

To the Daily:

Melanie Newton ("Realism or racism?", *McGill Daily*, September 30)

should take that chip off her shoulder. Even in an academic climate characterised by the unremitting censure of political correctness, Mrs. Newton's attack on Professor Donderi seemed egregiously baseless — an unintentional comical farce of the mindless reflex militancy that has become the common currency of debate on minority issues.

Professor Donderi's transgression, as I understand it, was to show a film whose contents were genuinely representative of the real world. This, of course, is in sharp contrast to the popularly held belief that it is preferable to promulgate half-baked myth and fiction in order to reaffirm minority self-image à la Dr. Ivan Van Sertima.

There are ways in which Professor Donderi might have gotten his message across without censure, however. Were he a black rapper who espoused crime and the murder of white policemen, his graphic depiction of inner city squalor and crime might not only be considered politically correct, it would be utterly avant-garde.

Jonathan Kay
Masters Engineering, U1

Destroyed credibility

To the Daily:

In his October 1 comment, Dan Robins complains about the unintentional lack of objectivity in the press. Dan, it is said that you should let him or her who has not sinned cast the first stone. I think deliberate subjectivity is infinitely worse than inadvertent subjectivity, and deliberate subjectivity is the only way I can describe your

article "Rediscovering African history", printed just the day before your comment.

True, describing allegedly racist historians as "Eurofucked" is certainly not "quoting someone explicitly...in thrall to Western capitalism". That does not make it right. I don't think even Dan would claim that you can get the full story by quoting only those enthralled with Marxism, Anarchism, Feminism and anti-Racism. And this is not to say that these are not worthy causes; it is only to say that it is only one side of the story.

There would be no feminist crusade if there were no misogynists. Similarly there would have been no talk about redrafting world history if there were no possibility of there being "Eurofucked historians". This does not mean that Dan Robins should have used this phrase.

Eliminating this phrase would not have changed the direction or meaning of the article. Inserting the phrase destroys the credibility of the article because it makes indistinct those opinions that belong to Dr. Ivan van Sertima, the professor about whom the article allegedly was, and Dan Robins, the author of the article. The comment that appeared the next day then served to completely destroy Dan Robins's credibility.

Congratulations, Dan. You have managed to both dilute your messages, and destroy your own credibility. Perhaps in the future you should continue to merely read your Chomsky, and refrain from writing about it.

Jeremy Michelson
U3 Science

All readers are welcome to submit letters under 300 words. Add your name, program, year and telephone number. Anonymity can be provided; talk to an editor beforehand. Opinions can be expressed in the form of a Hyde Park, no more than 500 words.



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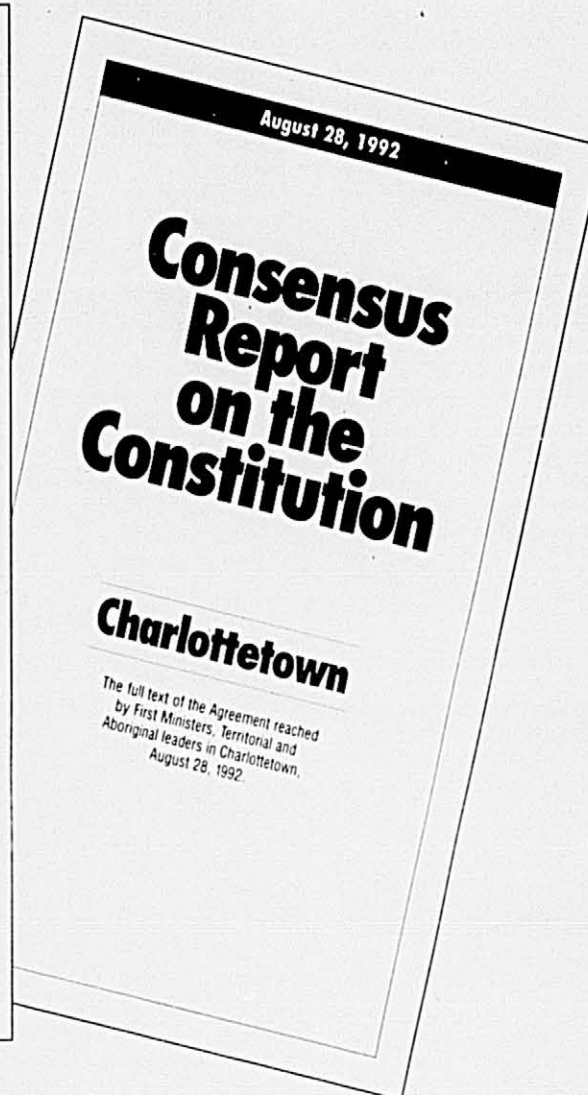
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